

# frontier

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## AN ELABORATE HOAX

THE Government of India's scheme of reorganisation of Assam, if it can be so called, is a bundle of compromises. It seeks to pacify the recalcitrant in the central leadership of the Congress party, led by Mr Morarji Desai, on the one hand and the Assam Congress on the other. From the ready endorsement the scheme has secured from the Congress Working Committee and the Assam Chief Minister, Mr B. P. Chaliha, it would appear that the Government has been able to resolve the intra-party dispute that was raging over the proposal for nearly two years. So obsessed was the Government with what should have been a secondary consideration that it lost sight of the purpose of reorganisation. If the Congress leaders of Assam could have their way, they would have had more territory added to their domain to misrule. The demand for an autonomous hill State was the result of their indifference to the hill areas, of their disregard of the needs and aspirations of the hill people. If Assam is disintegrating the fault is of the Assam Congress which has been enjoying a monopoly of power in the State ever since independence. The demand for autonomy is actually a censure on the Assam Government which the Government of India upheld by agreeing to reorganise the State. But the hill people whose grievances the scheme of reorganisation is supposed to redress have been ignored and the Government has pampered those whose misdeeds have put Assam in a state of constant convulsion.

The complex pattern of administration proposed for the hill areas is actually a denial of the demand of the hill people. This elaborate evasion became necessary because the Government of India dared not carry out its earlier plan to grant full statehood to the hill areas in the face of opposition from the Assam Congress. It had to give in to the Assam lobby led by Mr Morarji Desai whose main argument against a separate hill State was that it would encourage similar demands in other tribal and hill areas. Mr Desai is a known champion of the status quo and is incapable of learning from experience. Neither his opposition nor the orgy of violence over which he presided could prevent the birth of Maharashtra. In future also there will be new States in spite of Mr Desai and the like of him, if the people wanted them. By resisting such demands the Government only throws away the opportunity of doing things gracefully and helps in strengthening the impression that it understands the language of

coercion and violence alone. The demand for autonomy comes up periodically in one region or another not because the Government yielded in the past to such demands elsewhere but because people in that region refuse to be treated any longer as inferior citizens. As long as Mr Desai is unable to bring this home to his partymen and persuade them to mend their ways, demands for autonomy will continue to haunt the Centre.

The Government is deluding itself if it thinks that the hill people will regard the proposed sub-State as autonomous. At a time when, in spite of the Constitution, the federal character of the Republic is collapsing fast and the autonomy of States is being curiously infringed by an overbearing Centre, a sub-State cannot expect to have any freedom of action. Even under the scheme as it is, it will suffer from too many constraints. The pompous name notwithstanding, the Government of the new State will be nothing but a glorified local body; the additional powers granted to it are marginal, and there will be too many authorities around to watch how these powers are exercised. The sub-State will not be born with the best of relations with the Government of Assam whose constant endeavour will be to make things difficult for the hill leaders. For this it will have built-in constitutional pretexts, including law and order. The exclusion of law and order from the transferred subjects will enable the Congress Government of Assam to police the new Government and make a mockery of autonomy. A State within a State is an absurdity, a perversion of language which takes in none but professional cheer-leaders. The fraud is being played on the hill people on the specious plea that Assam is a border State and the needs of defence are supreme. This assumes that the hill people are less alert than the people of the plains over the country's security. The collective insinuation, just because the hill people have demanded a separate State of their own, of course within the Indian Union, shows up an attitude which is alienating them from the people of the plains and may push them into

positions which are not their intention to take. The reorganisation scheme may, if at all, bring a temporary respite, but the problem of Assam remains unresolved. Time will only make it more intractable.

## Cricket

What was this silly incident over Basil D'Oliveira? If the Government of the country—and a government which has, or at least had once upon a time, socialist pretensions—can refuse entry to coloured people holding valid passports issued by itself, why should the MCC's original non-inclusion of D'Oliveira into the team visiting South Africa scandalise anybody at all? The United Kingdom, let it be admitted, is by now a puny little country, with the prejudices, jealousies and petty-mindedness characterising such a country. It has one of the slowest rates of growth among the Western nations; apart from the Beatles, Twiggy and the mini-skirt, its sole international achievement in recent years has been its victory in the World Cup for football last year. Merely because people continue to use their language in different parts of the world, we have no business to shore up our illusions about the racists. In part, the illusion has been carefully nurtured by the Oxbridge crowd who still man our civil service and the industrial establishment. But Blimeys are just Blimeys. It is only because the claptrap of the Commonwealth helps them to squeeze some economic benefits at our expense that occasional noises are made regarding how bad the South African and Southern Rhodesian regimes are. These noises are for the sake of record. The British ethos is more faithfully reflected in the ravings of an Enoch Powell or a Duncan Sandys: rid the island of the wogs, and let Britannia rule—even if it be a rule over the skimpy backyard.

The decision on D'Oliveira was nothing out of the ordinary; what else did the whiners and protesters expect? There is a basic inferiority complex at work here, feeding the notion that because

the British have a skin whiter than ours, the liberalism of most of them is also whiter. The notion is a myth. To talk of the socialist basis of the British Government is equally beside the point. One can quote both Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg in this context, but that will be scarcely necessary. It is the fat provided by the outlying colonial territories which enabled the West Europeans to indulge in the occasional pastime of socialism. With the fat off, the calculus assumes an essentially bread-and-butter dimension. After all, it was a great socialist, Guy Mollet, who had hatched the 1956 Suez plot with the British and the Israelis on behalf of France; the offensive in Algeria too was conducted under the direction of regimes with impeccable domestic credentials concerning socialist beliefs. Nearer home, even Mr S. K. Patil—and Mr Morarji Desai—assert their devotion to socialism. Once you know how to define the term, socialism and skulduggery can well co-exist together.

Over D'Oliveira, the British may or may not still have a case to answer but the righteous indignation of an assortment of Indians was just so much fatuity. The matrimonial columns in this country's newspapers read about the same as they did thirty or forty years ago; the market value of a would-be bride continues to be a function of the pigmentation of her skin. Before straying into cricket fields around the world, some of the shouting gentlemen should first tackle the innumerable issues of domestic apartheid. Or else shut up.

## American Trends

It may be difficult to see George Wallace in the White House, but he has already changed the pre-election scene in the U.S. in a manner which disturbs not only the two main candidates for the Presidency but also sections of the American public with lingering illusions about the country's commitment to liberal values. But is there, after all, that difference between him and his two respectable ri-

vals? True, he does not have their pious pretensions; he does not even seem to care if he is looked upon as a thug; and he certainly makes no claim to culture, perhaps not even to literacy. "We gonna show 'em in November that the average American is sick and tired of all these overeducated ivory-tower folks with pointed heads lookin' down their noses at you and me . . . . When I'm President not one dime of Federal money will be spent to bus any student anywhere . . . And if any demonstrator ever lays down in front of my car, it will be the last car he'll ever lay down in front of."

The voice from Alabama may shock those Americans who like to believe that their country is, in fact, different or would be different under Richard Nixon or Hubert Horatio Humphrey. Hasn't Nixon been as much a reactionary in domestic affairs as in foreign policy? And is Humphrey really of any other persuasion? Wallace makes no bones about what he will do to demonstrators in the streets; when the Mayor of Chicago did almost the same, Humphrey asked: "Is there any wonder that the police had to take action?" It is not only Wallace who would subordinate everything to what he regards as "law and order"; both Nixon and Humphrey have already made this their main theme. Sensing a groundswell of right reaction against the voices of dissent and protest—whether on Vietnam or on civil rights—both the Republican and Democratic candidates are promising the electorate a "law-and-order society". Perhaps a fitting successor to Johnson's Great Society.

"The quiet Americans, the silent Americans, who have not been the protesters, who have not been the shouters—their voice is welling up across the country today. The great majority of Americans are angry." So declared Nixon in a recent speech, and to satisfy these angry hawks and racists, he would put down all the protesting and shouting. Humphrey was more sanctimonious. He said he would appeal to the "basic goodness" of Americans, who—in his view—

were free from bitterness, hate or racial prejudice. And, to appeal to this tolerant and kindly people, his election campaigners have planned a drive aimed at "the 45-year old white man in the suburbs". No plan to end the Vietnam war, no pledge to end segregation or Negro poverty, but a simple assurance that the narrow-minded, prejudice-filled members of America's unspeakable suburban society would not be bothered by shouts, protests, or even any uncomfortable questions. To ensure better "law and order" he would probably increase the supply of guns to white homes and individuals. Wallace, at least, is less hypocritical. He would simply order the police to shoot down Negroes and Vietnam protesters.

## The Mysterious Bolivian

Che's body could not be brought to Cuba. But this failure was more than compensated by the publication of his Bolivian diary, whose photocopy was smuggled out of the hands of the Bolivian Government. For once the CIA seemed outmanoeuvred by the Castroist intelligence agency. This, however, proved the beginning of a high drama. Following the release of the diary from Havana, Mr Antonio Arguedas, Bolivian Minister of the Interior and intelligence chief, fled to Chile, resulting in a mini-crisis for the Bolivian Government. A state of siege was declared in La Paz.

In a speech delivered on July 24 Fidel Castro declared that it was indeed Mr Arguedas "who made it possible for photocopies of Che's diary to reach the hands of persons connected with the National Liberation Army of Bolivia. He did this completely disinterestedly as he was outraged by the way in which the Bolivian regime had treated Che, cravenly murdering him after he had been wounded in combat and taken prisoner, and was in disagreement with the general policy of the regime that tyrannises Bolivia, blindly obedient to Yankee imperialism. And not only this, but at tremendous risk to his life, the former

Minister of the Interior of the Government of Bolivia maintained an attitude of co-operation over a period of many months with the revolutionary movement in Bolivia." Fidel further alleged that the CIA was trying by every possible means to get Arguedas back to Bolivia. "To send him back to Bolivia would be to hand him over to Barrientos' and CIA's gunmen to murder him. . . . Even if the Chilean authorities grant his request for asylum in the country or give him permission to go to another country we do not doubt that the CIA will do everything in its power to eliminate him physically because of its panic stemming from former Minister Arguedas' knowledge of its activities." For the safety of Arguedas' life Fidel generously offered him asylum in Cuba.

But after making some hush-hush trips to London and New York Arguedas finally chose to land at La Paz instead of at Havana, opening thereby a new act of the drama. Immediately upon his arrival he held a Press conference at the airport and made a detailed confession about his connection with the CIA. Mr Arguedas, an ex-communist sympathizer, was an under-secretary of the Government after the 1964 coup in which General Barrientos came to power as head of the military junta. "My term", he continued, "was uneventful until January 1965 when an air attache at the U.S. Embassy approached me. His name was Col Edward Fox. What he told me was this: That I was regarded as a communist infiltrator into the Bolivian Government and that unless I resigned, all American aid to this country would be cut immediately. I had no choice and resigned. But about 30 days later Fox told me that if I was interested in regaining my post he knew a very influential man who might be able to help. He introduced me to Larry Sternfield, an embassy attache who at the time was chief of the CIA here. Sternfield told me that I might be reinstated if I would consent to go to Lima for an interrogation. I accepted. I flew to Lima, where I was interrogated for four days at a CIA apartment. That was February or March 1965. They had an

electric apparatus in the apartment and measured everything—there were electrodes attached to my chest, my hand and my head. It was a series of rapid-fire questions in which I was permitted only yes or no answers." After that, Mr Arguedas said, he was tricked into drinking a drugged Coca-Cola which changed his "state of mind" and left him 'weak'. "All at once they began serious questions again and I felt as if my whole life was being pumped out of me." After the end of the interrogation Arguedas was reinstated in his post "with the complete support of the CIA".

Arguedas startled the reporters by admitting that his flight to Chile was also made at the bidding of the CIA. And throughout his journey he was escorted by another CIA agent. He also confessed to having passed various kinds of misinformation at the instruction of the CIA to political figures and the Press. The misinformation, he said, had to do with the death of Guevara, French financial credits in Bolivia and many other matters.

Arguedas however, raised more questions than he answered. Why did the CIA make him flee Bolivia and return after a month? Why was he allowed to "reveal" about CIA activities in marathon Press conferences? Arguedas' confessions were broadcast verbatim by radio stations throughout Bolivia and a complete transcript was published in the local newspapers. How to explain the softness of the Bolivian Government which seems to spare Arguedas a court martial and will try him instead in the Bolivian Congress? Has Bolivia slipped out of the grip of the CIA? Or was Arguedas' latest performance the result of another bout of drugged Coca-Cola? In the Kafkaesque world of the CIA the difference between information and misinformation indeed gets blurred.

## Strike

At the time of going to press, it is not clear how the situation relating to the token strike of Central Govern-

ment employees will develop. Mr Chavan is resolved to break the morale of the employees by a naked show of force. If it be a fact that the leadership was not prepared for such ruthless measures, he may succeed temporarily. But the temper of the demonstrators in Calcutta in the

last two or three days has shown that Mr Chavan will not be able to have his own way all the time. The experience of quite a number of unsuccessful strikes in different fields in the past few months, however, calls for a drastic reevaluation of tactics and strategy and changes in leadership.

## View from Delhi

# Return Of The DIR ?

FROM A POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

MR Chavan's strong-man image has never been in doubt. At least not after he had wielded the sledge-hammer of a 40,000-member police force to swat the fly of a straggling student march of 20 on Parliament House in November 1966. That was his real debut as Home Minister at the Centre. After that, in preparation for the exit of the draconian DIR, Mr Chavan was busy arming himself with special powers under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. (We must be grateful that the Act leaves unlawful thoughts alone, until it is amended through an ordinance!)

We owe last week's series of ordinances and regulations to break the one-day token strike of Central Government employees to Mr Chavan's strongmanship, or perhaps a sudden awareness of a need to refurbish his strong-man image. Of late, the feeling that the Centre is losing grip on things has been growing. If nothing else, the Home Minister has been helpless in the face of communal riots or the depredations of the Shiv Sena in his own city. The entire Indo-Gangetic plain is under President's Rule and Mr Chavan is helpless in the face of police excesses in Uttar Pradesh. There has been an alarming rise in the reports of such excesses after the State came under President's Rule.

The Cabinet was split on the ordinances to ban the proposed September 19 token strike. Mr Morarji Desai wanted it while some did not. Ulti-

mately it was left to the Home Ministry to deal with the situation as it developed. The implication of this decision was clear because Mr Chavan has always believed in strong-arm methods and could be depended upon to 'smash the strike. The Government has been impervious to the unrest building in the country. It thought the Central Government employees movement was smashed forever with the fiasco of the general strike called on March 9, 1960. It is not so much the one-day strike the Government fears now. Nor even the possibility of its developing into a general strike. The political implications of the strike must have unnerved Mrs Gandhi and her colleagues. Nobody seriously believes that the Government could be brought down through such a strike. But a strike could be the beginning of a challenge which might take a political form. If the Centre does not prove it is really strong, it would be laying itself open to new attacks.

The strike in a way is forcing a new kind of confrontation between the Opposition parties and the Centre. In a city like Delhi, where mostly Government employees live, the Jana Sangh could not dissociate itself with the strike move. Other non-Congress parties are already in it. The DMK in Madras cannot keep off.

But what is shocking is total paralysis of the political parties amidst the Centre's offensive in the form of ordinances. Where is the movement

against it? Where is the political leadership that could have taken the country to something like a Bharat Bandh which, according to Mr Dange, is something more than a total general strike? The Centre is lucky that Parliament is not in session, is there any guarantee that the political leadership of the left would have given the movement a direction?

In all likelihood, the September 19 strike will be smashed and immediately there will be the "I-told-you-so" lot deploring the adventurism of the Central Government employees. But then is there any other way a movement is built in this country?

#### Fiasco

Mr Atulya Ghosh and his friend's might derive immense satisfaction at the discourtesy to which they subjected the Prime Minister in Calcutta. But the two-day Congress Working Committee meeting here ended in a fiasco for the Syndicate. Mr Atulya Ghose who had asked for a special meeting to discuss the Government's stand on Czechoslovakia gave in tamely and even joined the semantic hair-splitting on "deplore" and "condemn". Mr Atulya Ghosh is believed to have proved that "deplore" is a stronger term than "condemn". With Mr S. K. Patil away in Europe, the Working Committee meeting did not witness the showdown that was expected. The Syndicate (the Prime Minister says there isn't one in her party) is not for an immediate showdown as evident from Mr Patil's call by proxy for collective leadership at the Centre, which properly paraphrased means inclusion of Mr Patil in the Cabinet. The Prime Minister does not appear unduly perturbed over anything on the home front. She is set to leave on a safari of some Latin American countries—all of them fascist regimes with which India should have no rapport—leaving Mr Chavan to deal with anything that might develop in the wake of the September 19 strike.

Last week's Indo-Soviet exercise at the Bhagat-Firyubin level was aimed at retrieving some of the lost Soviet goodwill in the country. The Soviet side has been trying to make it known

that India would get all the economic aid and defence equipment it wants and that since all arms sale to Pakistan will be on a commercial basis, what Pakistan can buy cannot exceed six per cent of the volume of Soviet commitment to India. As a result of the dialogue there might even be a tacit understanding that the Soviet Union will not press India to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

During the talks, both the sides found themselves agreeing completely on their assessment of the Chinese "threat" to South-East Asia. If Mrs Gandhi's recent statement that there cannot be a dialogue with China because the cultural revolution atmosphere was hardly conducive to such a dialogue, her glib talk of a flexible policy towards neighbours is something of a joke. What would happen if some day the Soviet Union and China got close, has not worried Mrs Gandhi yet because the Soviets would have us believe that nothing of the kind would happen.

On the eve of the talks, an All India Radio broadcast devoted seven out of ten minutes to an attack on the Soviet role in Czechoslovakia and Soviet diplomats were red in the face. The External Affairs Ministry rushed to one of the dailies with an apologetic explanation that the Czech issue would not be raised in the form indicated by AIR during the talks. That was the substance of the explanation offered. The Government's effort was to convince the Soviet delegation that Indian reaction to the Czech episode was very strong and Mrs Gandhi has been desisting from condemning the Soviet Union at great risk to her position in the party. It is now known for certain that before the Indian delegation decided to abstain from voting on the U. N. resolution, there was a hurried dialogue with the Soviet delegation. The Government's leverage with the Soviets on economic aid is a little higher as a result. The wagon deal has gone through, at last, according to Mr Poonacha.

September 15, 1968

## Frontier

### Special Number

#### Next Week

Poverty of Nations :

Joan Robinson

Peking Prague, Moscow

K. N. Ramchandran

Translations by

Satyajit Ray

France : A Beginning

The Cubans : Monitor

A Chinese Envoy :

G. P. Deshpande

U. S. In Asia :

Dick Crooth

What's the use of  
writing in English ? :

Anirudha Gupta

Russell's Autobiography

Ashok Rudra

Shikar Tales :

Hiran Kumar Sanyal

Bengali Cinema :

K. S. Ray

And other articles and  
regular features

## Politics—Kamaraj Style

M. R.

MADRAS has had a weirdly uncommon brand of Congress politicking these 25 years with Mr Kamaraj atop the party. But with the uncrowned king decrowned, the myth that the Congress in Madras has never known factionalism is dissolving like a mist. Congressmen, farthest from power and sidelined, perhaps for ever, are slugging it out on the streets. Yet the imbecile fringe of the pseudo-left in the country (which of course includes the CPI) sees in a played-out Kamaraj a passionately committed socialist whom the vile vested interests are out to ambush. The Congress in Madras can be no different qualitatively from what it is in the rest of the country. Yet Mr Kamaraj has been wearing a fake halo around him.

The C. Subramaniam group which is trying to call the Kamaraj bluff finds itself confronting the nondescript political free-booters of doubtful pedigree whom the former Congress President has gathered around himself. Obviously, Mr C. Subramaniam knows there is no chance of toppling the DMK Ministry and even the Centre is now reconciled to this reality. Any "Operation Topple" engineered from New Delhi will acquire the colour of a vindictive war against a State standing up to the Hindi blackmail. The Centre would rather let the DMK continue for another reason too. The Congress just cannot replace the DMK. But the motley crowd around Mr Kamaraj is at the toppling game. So much so, when Mr C. Subramaniam declared that during the absence of Mr C. N. Annadurai in the United States for treatment there would be no political agitation against the DMK Ministry, the Kamaraj faction just could not stomach it. This self-imposed moratorium on agitations has a comic opera touch to it but it sums up a political reality in the State. The Congress is keen on putting up a

good show in the coming elections to the Madras Corporation. The civic elections might well turn out to be a decisive test of the Congress claim that it is acquiring a new mass base in the State amidst growing popular disenchantment with the DMK regime. Any political agitation at this stage, taking advantage of Mr Annadurai's absence, might well recoil on the Congress. Mr Annadurai's ruthless lieutenant, Mr M. Karunanidhi, might get tough with the Congress on the eve of the Corporation elections scheduled for October. So the Congress faction led by Mr C. Subramaniam is playing it cool while the Kamaraj faction is getting desperate.

There is little doubt that the DMK is losing hold over students who swept the party into power on the Hindi issue. The main reason is the DMK's betrayal on Hindi. There is no attempt to force the issue and the stalemate continues. No wonder last month the DMK candidate was defeated in the crucial contest for the presidency of the Pachaiyappa's College Union. This college has been the DMK stronghold since 1952 and has given the DMK many of its leaders including Mr Annadurai himself. The victory of a Congress-backed candidate here does not vindicate the Congress claim that it is acquiring a hold among the students. The Pachaiyappa's college verdict is just an anti-power vote, a romantic protest of the kind witnessed earlier in the year in Kerala where the Communists were losing out to the Congress in the college and school elections.

The new myth that is being built around Mr Kamaraj is that he is the new leader of the younger generation. It is true that Mr Kamaraj has been taking a line approximating to that of the secessionists when he is in Tamil and professing supra-nationalism outside. To an extent, Mr Kamaraj could provide the alternative focus to the DMK which has quietly jettisoned its secessionist plank to become a respectable parliamentary party. The lesson is simple: any party aspiring for a mass base—be it the Congress, the DMK or the CPI(M)—has to accept the secessionist slogan to

some degree or the other. The memorandum to the Prime Minister by some Congressmen of Madras State charging Mr Kamaraj with pro-secessionist activity would strengthen the validity of this inference.

The relevance of the Congress in Madras politics is itself in doubt. To outdo the DMK and take an openly secessionist position to pressurise the Centre on the Hindi issue is the only course left to it. There is no other political slogan left at this stage, even to embarrass the DMK. Mr Kamaraj has rallied around him elements which had hitherto belonged to secessionist movements in the State. But then, as long as the Congress in Madras State is the component of an all-India party, how can it acquire any sense of direction needed to achieve its goal?

The Congress is therefore reconciled to making its political presence felt and nothing more. It has no chance of toppling the Ministry unless it leads a secessionist movement embarrassing both the Centre and the DMK Ministry. Short of that, its manoeuvrability is limited. So politics in Madras has reached the virtual dead end.

### Kerala

In neighbouring Kerala, the picture is bizarre. Mr E. M. S. Namboodiripad, past master in drafting alternative documents or inner-party discussion, is busy getting a term of specialists to hammer out an alternative fourth plan with which he would confront the Centre. His anti-Centre stance, like that of the DMK Chief Minister's, aggregates to mere politicking and nothing more. The demand for greater autonomy for the States or for a permanent finance commission to go into the sharing of resources is just slogan-mongering and nothing more.

The United Front Ministry's record in Kerala has been depressingly poor. The gimmicks are wearing thin. Kerala is not prepared to pay its own farmers by way of procurement price for rice. Time was when the Kerala leaders used to talk glibly of the State's right to arrange for its own

rice imports if the Centre did not meet its commitment of 75,000 tonnes a month. The argument was that Kerala's farm produce earned substantial foreign exchange for India. Fact is Kerala's produce is allowed to be exported while Andhra's rice surplus is not. In a normal year, if Andhra Pradesh has a rice surplus of one million tonnes, it should in all fairness be allowed to sell it on the market that fetches it the most. If Kerala's argument is that a part of the foreign exchange it earns for the country should be set aside and the State Government be left free to buy rice against this anywhere in the world, it logically follows that Andhra Pradesh should be free enough to sell its rice surplus to anybody it likes in India and abroad. Pray, can't Andhra Pradesh import a whole steel plant for Visakhapatnam in return for rice which the United States would be glad to grab at a fancy price for consumption in South Vietnam so that the war could be kept going?

With an estimated shortfall of three to four million tonnes of food-grains this kharif season and with the drought in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala's rice position would turn critical in a few months. The Centre may not be able to keep its commitment, "Happiness is 75,000 tonnes of rice. Ridiculous? No, Sir!" reads the copy of a slick Kerala Government advertisement in the national Press. But even 75,000 tonnes would not do if the domestic production is not mopped up. The United Front Ministry is reluctant to touch the rich peasant and has surrendered the rice trade to the blackmarketeers who generally belong to the Muslim League.

The CPI's theoreticians see in the structural reforms Mr Namboodiripad is supposed to be planning a hopeful sign which might lead to a rapprochement between the two communist parties. If a few structural reforms without a confrontation with the Centre on basic issues is all that the CPI wants, it will no doubt get them. The Ministry might linger on, listless, but when the balance-sheet is drawn on the eve of the next general elections, there will be very little in it to enthrone the voter.

## Revisiting East Africa—II

# Tanzania : China : Arusha

ANIRUDHA GUPTA

IT was Tanzania's *Saba Saba Day*\*. In front of TANU's head office a milling crowd hissed, laughed, swayed and swelled in number as the day grew warmer. Suddenly the *uhuru* drums began playing and the crowd cleared a space in its middle for the dancers. The sound of drums raced faster, the bodies moved, arched and wriggled in a wild bond of rhythm as the crowd waved and cheered madly.

At the meeting some Swede and Chinese delegates were present. They were given a big hand of welcome by the crowd. On the previous day the Chinese had opened the Friendship Textile Mill, which was constructed two months ahead of schedule and which, it was said, would produce 90 million square yards of cloth for Tanzania each year. The Chinese exhibited a replica of the mill and its various products in the industrial exhibition. Curiously, there was no portrait of Mao overshadowing the pavilion and, more curiously, in his speech at the opening ceremony of the mill, the Chinese Charge d'Affaires, Mr Po Ping, did not for once refer to the "invincible thoughts of Mao". Instead he dwelt on two basic themes; first, that China built the mill "as an aid to a country to develop self-reliance" and, second, that "racists" and "imperialists" should know that it was possible for the world's coloured underdogs to unite and help each other. This was a refreshingly different note from China's usual vaunt and, perhaps, the one Africans could understand better.

Indeed, it seems that China has abandoned its earlier policy of dragging Africa into a series of "revolutionary wars". Apart from the fact that this policy stretched to the limit China's resources, it antagonised a number of African governments. Be-

\* 7th July the day Tanganyika National Union (TANU) was born.

sides, it suffered serious reverses in Ghana, the Congo, Burundi and Guinea. Ever since, the Chinese seem to be concentrating their efforts in a few selected areas where they have already a foothold. In Zanzibar Chinese presence is formidable and the number of Chinese experts, technicians and doctors in mainland Tanzania is growing. Further, by offering to build the 1600-mile railway line between Dar-es-Salaam and Zambia's Copperbelt, the Chinese have earned the gratitude of two African governments. This offer seems to have two diplomatic aims—first, to show Zambians and Tanzanians that they can depend on China when the West or Russia fails to meet their expectations and, second, by providing an alternative route to the sea, make Zambia less dependent on Britain, Rhodesia and the Portuguese dependencies. Thus, while keeping its "anti-West" image intact, China hopes to win over a vacillating African Government to its side. Curiously, this policy is not very different from that of the Soviets who also believe that by providing strategic aid and assistance to the underdeveloped countries it is possible to launch them on the path of "non-capitalism".

### Liberation Movements

The concentration of Chinese diplomatic activity on Africa's eastern coast and in Central Africa may have another purpose. By maintaining friendly relations with Tanzania, China can influence various liberation movements in Southern Africa which have their headquarters either in Dar-es-Salaam or Lusaka. Quite obviously, a number of freedom-fighters look up to China for active support in their struggles. On the other hand, it is possible that China considers Southern Africa strategically more important than other parts of Africa as it would be here that the future of

African independence, pan-Africanism and socialism would finally be decided. This shows a gradual shift of China's attention from the North to the South. Prior to 1964 China was active in West Africa; then its centre of interest shifted to the Congo until the rout of Congolese rebels in 1965 and, since then it has come to be concentrated all along the border of the Zambesi river.

It is true that China's growing ties with Tanzania have created apprehensions in many diplomatic circles and in Dar-es-Salaam one often hears that Tanzania is becoming a "satellite" of China. This is scurrilous propaganda and Tanzanians resent it most.

In this connection it is worthwhile to note how Julius Nyerere interprets his country's growing relations with China. During his recent tour of China, he consistently emphasized two points. First, that Sino-Tanzanian friendship should not be misunderstood by other nations and, second, that this friendship did not deprive Tanzania of its right to exercise inde-

pendent judgment in world affairs. Thus, while agreeing that on the non-proliferation treaty both China and Tanzania took a similar stand, he pointed out to Chou En-lai, "Mr Prime Minister, your country is a nuclear power, mine is not. For the time being we happen to hold similar views on this particular matter. Of course this does not mean that China and Tanzania will always adopt the same policies, and will always have the same priorities of action."

Perhaps Nyerere believes that by taking such postures the West will not misunderstand him or, perhaps, he wants to make it clear to the Chinese that he is not willing to depend too much on them. Whatever may be the reasons, it is true that Tanzanians know they cannot adopt an extreme anti-West position because it will perhaps create more difficulties for them than they can manage. Besides, the example of Ghana is too fresh in their mind—if Nkrumah's strongly organized regime could fall as a result of the machinations of subversive forces—external or internal—what guarantee is there that such forces would not work against Tanzania? It is easy, as one TANU leader said, to arouse public anger against the politicians, for the African people still do not know what is good or bad for them. This is a basic element in African politics which the ex-metropolitan Powers have consistently exploited. How easy it is to start a rumour which turns into a riot, to build contact men among politicians through devious channels and, then, to pull the strings to overthrow a government. It is true that the process takes time to mature; but what is worth noting here is the fact that whereas it has been possible for moderate African governments to stabilise power with Western support, those radical nationalist regimes which tried to diversify their external relations without the approval of the West faced constantly the threat of political instability. This may show the strength of the world capitalist system or, conversely, the weakness of the world socialist system (is there any?), but what is clear to Tanzania's leaders is that they should try simultaneously

to make their country less dependent on either West or East, capitalists or socialists. It is in this context that their stress on self-reliance becomes meaningful. The philosophy behind the Arusha Declaration may briefly be summed up as follows:

- (a) "It is stupid to rely on money as the major instrument of development when we know only too well that our country is poor."
- (b) It is equally foolish to think that "we shall rid ourselves of poverty through foreign financial assistance."
- (c) It is true "we need foreign investment" but "how can we depend upon gifts, loans and investments ... without endangering our independence?"
- (d) It is a mistake to think that development begins with industrialization which, in fact, leads to the neglect of villages—the mainstay of the economy.
- (e) The emphasis therefore should shift from foreign aid to self-reliance; from towns to villages ... "it would be more appropriate for us to spend time in the villages showing the people how to bring about development through their own efforts, rather than going on so many long and expensive journeys abroad in search of development money."
- (f) All this involves a total change in outlook: application of intelligence to work; willingness to make sacrifice, new codes of behaviour in both private and public life.

The declaration therefore is not a cut-and-dried formula for Tanzania's economic progress, it is not even primarily aimed at capitalists and foreign investors (although it led to nationalization of all banks and key industries), but it reflects Nyerere's genuine anxiety to build a new leadership in both party and government. What kind of leaders should Tanzanians have? Should leaders occupy top ranks, dictate and govern people and make hay while the sun shines?

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Should they be loud-mouthed radicals who own houses or conduct private business to become a newly rich class? It is this vital question that Arusha tries to answer. It defines that leaders should serve and not lord it over the people. It is not that capitalism exploits only the material conditions, its values invade even the minds of men. To check this from happening, the declaration compels leaders of government and TANU to declare their personal assets; to cut down their salaries and to stop enjoying more than one source of income. These are very important steps, steps which Nkrumah intended to take in his famous "Dawn Broadcast", but which he failed to. And these decisions have given a new dimension to Tanzania's politics. There are people who swear by Arusha, there are others who wonder if the ideological debate has not gone too far. Who will know? Who will decide? Perhaps the people in their slow wondering way—by questioning the integrity of their leaders, by demanding that the letter and spirit of Arusha be observed in full.

Perhaps I have not been able to convey the impact of the declaration on Tanzanian society—the creation of a climate in which even ordinary men and women can participate in the general debate that concerns the nation. This is reflected in the heated debates on the floor of the National Assembly; in university discussions, group meetings and local conferences of the ruling party. Popular participation in a one-party democracy has so far remained a myth in Africa; but perhaps Tanzania will prove different, for it alone has taken sincere steps to come to grips with the manifold problems of post-independence Africa. "Mark my word", said one MP, "Tanzania has not said the last word on socialism." I heartily agreed with him. Truly, the journey has just begun.

(To be continued in October).

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## Marxism And Parliamentarism—I

ABDUL GAFAR

WHEN the First Congress of the Second International was held in Paris in 1889 it demonstrated that Marxism had become the dominant ideology of the international proletariat. However, this was the period of rapidly developing monopoly capitalism and imperialism. This created a new phenomenon—the growth of a substantial section of skilled and white-collar workers. These changed conditions profoundly affected the working-class movement, which were soon reflected in the growth of revisionism in all the social democratic parties led by Bernstein, Jaures, Millerand etc.

The development of revisionism came to a head when in France Millerand joined a bourgeois coalition ministry under a bourgeois constitution in 1898 against the background of the Dreyfus Affair. Marxists had participated in the elections as a part of their democratic struggle and sent their representatives to parliament. They considered these elections and parliaments as platforms and as weapons in the hands of the working class to intensify their struggle against their class enemy. But a socialist joining a bourgeois coalition government was a different thing altogether—it meant renunciation of class struggle. In addition, the Millerand case was particularly objectionable to workers and all progressives since one of the leading members of the Cabinet was General Gallifot, the principal butcher of the Communards of 1871.

Immediately after Millerand's entry into the "united front" Ministry, the Government employed its police to shoot down the colonial workers in Martinique as well as the metropolitan workers at Chalons (cf. Naxalbari). Millerand's policy of the bourgeois coalition ministry was strongly supported by Jean Jaures, leader of one of the five French socialist parties, all of which were affiliated to the Second International. Another socialist leader,

Jules Guesde, vehemently opposed Millerand's action. Millerandism thus brought about a serious crisis in the socialist movement both nationally as well as internationally and became the first serious international struggle between the Right and Left in the Second International. It shook the organisation and threatened to split the movement.

Naturally, when the Sixth Congress of the Second International held its session in Paris in 1900 the Millerand case occupied the centre of attention. The Congress became divided into three groups.

The first resolution, put forward by Guesde, condemned Millerandism *in principle* and demanded that the Congress "allows the proletariat to take part in bourgeois elections only in the form of winning seats on its own strength and on the basis of the class struggle, and it forbids any participation whatever of socialists in bourgeois governments, towards which socialists must take up an attitude of unbending opposition". Guesde's resolution was strongly supported by Vaillant, an old veteran of the Paris Commune. Another supporter of this position was Rosa Luxemburg who said: "In bourgeois society social democracy, by its very nature, has to play the part of an opposition party, it can only come forward as the governing party on the ruins of the bourgeois State."

As opposed to this resolution Jaures put forward the Rightist point of view and stressed it also as a matter of principle. He claimed that by Millerand's action the socialists had saved the Republic from the hands of the Royalist reactionaries. Further, that by such actions socialists can introduce progressive measures and thus gradually transform the whole society. "Such a socialist participation in capitalist governments," asserted Jaures, "is the beginning of the socialist revolution."

### "Rubber" Resolution

Kautsky, who upto then had generally taken a stand with the Left against Right opportunism, now took up a centrist position and in a resolu-

## Calcutta Diary

GYAN KAPUR

tion, which became known as a *rubber* resolution, he said that the question was not of any principle, but of tactics: "The Congress does not have to decide upon this question"; it should be left to the decision of the individual parties.

After thus leaving the door wide open for all kinds of opportunistic manoeuvres, Kautsky valiantly proceeded to fight the imaginary enemies with radical phrases and said that a socialist who "becomes a minister independently of his party, or whenever he ceases to be the delegate of that party" is a traitor and in such a case he must resign.

The Left bitterly attacked Kautsky's "rubber" resolution, but the voting was so manipulated (each country had two votes) that it was passed by 29 to 9. Lenz, the historian of the Second International, remarks: "This was the first great defeat for the revolutionary wing of the International."

Millerand refused to resign from the bourgeois Cabinet and was eventually expelled from his party, but for many years he continued to serve the capitalists as a traitor to the working-class cause.

After the Russian Revolution and the founding of the Communist International one of the main tasks before the communists was to bring about unity among the shattered ranks of the working class. At the Third Comintern Congress in 1921 Lenin formulated the United Front policy—an important policy which was to cover a whole period in the international working-class movement. This united front tactic inevitably brought the question of the possibility of an ultimate united front government to the forefront. At the 4th Comintern Congress in 1922 under the guidance of Lenin himself, various forms of popular governments were discussed. The resolution formulated the question in the following manner:

"The Communist International must anticipate the following possibilities:

"1. A Liberal workers' government, such as existed in Australia and likely to be formed in Great Britain in the near future.

"2. A social democratic workers' government (Germany).

"3. A workers' and peasants' government—such possibilities exist in the Balkans, in Czechoslovakia etc.

4. "A workers' government in which communists participate.

"5. A real proletarian workers' government, which the Communist Party alone can embody in a pure form."

### Correct Relationship

The resolution further laid down what should be the relationship of the communist parties with such governments:

"The first two types are not revolutionary workers' governments, but disguised coalitions between the bourgeois and anti-revolutionary groups. Such workers' governments are tolerated, at critical moments, by the weakened bourgeoisie, in order to dupe the workers as to the true class character of the State, or with the aid of corrupt leaders, to divert the revolutionary onslaught of the proletariat and to gain time. The communists cannot take part in such governments. On the contrary, they must ruthlessly expose their true character to the masses."

Regarding the third and fourth categories, the resolution pointed out that they are not proletarian dictatorships, but may be the starting point for the struggle for such dictatorship. "Only the workers' government consisting of communists can be the true embodiment of the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Since the passing of this resolution by the 4th Comintern Congress 45 years ago much water has flown under the bridges. Revisionism, which was fought so hard by Lenin as the main enemy within the working class, has reappeared in the Marxist movement again. Initiated and led by Khrushchevite revisionist leadership of the Soviet Union, the parliamentary illusion of peaceful transition to socialism is being urged again, with disastrous results to the international working class movement.

(To be continued in October).

**B**ARRING unseasonal rain nothing should spoil the coming Puja festivities over which last year hung for a time the threat of defection of the then Chief Minister, Mr Ajoy Mukherjee, leading to his war-like preparations to meet the expected wrath of the people. Events later on actually proved to be worse than fears. The Ides of November are approaching again and the days of the Puja holidays may be the last that the citizens of Calcutta and perhaps West Bengal will enjoy in the atmosphere of an uneasy truce. After the Pujas will come the election campaign in full swing—if the elections are not deferred. Already there have been violent deaths, alleged to be political murders. Judging by the terror that was let loose by the Congress-backed Ministry of Dr P. C. Ghosh last year, should the Congress by any chance win, that would be an opportunity for settling old scores. Should the UF win, we can take it that no stone will be left unturned by the vested interests to reduce it to impotence. This is the time, therefore, to take a good look at the role of the leftists in relation to religion in general and the Pujas in particular.

The plain fact is that most of our revolutionaries funk it when it comes to fighting religiosity and its multifarious manifestations. I have even heard from some so-called Marxists that there need not necessarily be any contradiction between religion and Marxism. As a result we are given the astonishing spectacle of earnest communists, Right, Left, or something else, going in for the sacred thread for their sons, getting married to chanting of mantras, arranging marriages with proper attention to the niceties of caste, taking part in all the family religious ceremonies. This is a fantastic situation possible only in our country where much that passes for strong feeling and conviction is only mimicry. The parrot has no

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emotion behind its voice whether its words praise or abuse.

Those who believe in revolution must fight all manifestations of religion. But unfortunately that requires a total change in our life which few are prepared to make. This leads to strange situations of which the role of left-minded young men and women in the Pujas in Calcutta and West Bengal is the best example.

Already the Puja pandals are going up all over Calcutta. From what I see, in spite of the economic recession, unemployment and what not, the Pujas this year are not going to be less lavish and wasteful than they usually are. One thing, however, is noteworthy this year. There is none of that feverish, familiar activity for collection of subscriptions. In fact, so far this year I have not been approached by even one club for money or an advertisement in the so-called souvenirs. I am quite happy to be ignored but apparently the money position as far as the Pujas this year are concerned is quite easy and the reason has something to do with the coming elections.

The connection between elections and young men's clubs and organizations in Calcutta and elsewhere in West Bengal is long and intimate. Every candidate has to depend on these organizations and they extract their price. The influx of a large number of young revolutionaries into these clubs has hardly had any worthwhile influence on their character. Maybe, on the other hand, the prevailing traditions of the clubs have perverted what little ideology these young men and a few women had before. The total collections made by all the clubs in West Bengal on account of different pujas will certainly run into several crores. Out of this hardly one decimal point is spent on any worthwhile object.

I am all for the festival side of the pujas. But when so-called revolutionaries enter the sphere something different is expected and not just blind conformism in the name of gradualness. That is not the language of revolution. I have watched with anger bustee children being driven away from en-

tering a function organized by a club where practically every second leader was a leftist.

The reason for all this is not far to see. Ritual, where it has been handed down from generation to generation, has supreme power and is stronger than dry intelligence. So far our revolutionaries have failed to appreciate the necessity of building up concrete images before the people. There are numerous clubs in Calcutta with their own bands. In spite of leftists being in these clubs, the only activity of the bands is to parade with the immersion processions of puja deities. On occasions of Durga Puja, Kali Puja or Saraswati Puja, I have seen many of the young revolutionaries working hard to organize and lead the processions, with bands playing. What a pity that a similar procession cannot be arranged on May Day with a few bands and fireworks or on the occasion of the October Revolution or to celebrate any victory over the Congress. But it is useless to blame these young people. The failure lies elsewhere, at the top.

\* \* \*

The more I think of it, the more I am coming to have the opinion that the cry for nationalization, given the present objective conditions in our country, is doing more harm than good except in a limited sense insofar as the employees themselves are concerned and even then not always. To have an existing or a new industry in the public sector as it is called and get it administered by dyed-in-the-wool bureaucrats is not my idea of nationalization. In the event when such large undertakings of national importance are handed over to bureaucrats who do not believe in nationalisation, the result is a form of State capitalism where the administrators consider it at best their paternal property, to be disposed off as they think best. The net result of nationalization in most such cases is to paint a picture of inefficiency and thus decry socialism.

Take Haringhata Milk Supply in Calcutta. Its inefficiency is monumental. While it is perpetually short

of milk, only a few years back it went in for advertising in a big way announcing grandiose plans for appointment of stockists for its 'Camiss' Butter and Ghee. A good deal of money was spent in this and in printing tins but fate overtook the officials very soon. After that came the famous now-on-now-off scheme of meeting the demand by controlling the use of chhana. The failure of all the efforts is, of course, due to the usual snag. The schemes are drawn by officials who have divorced themselves from all meaningful contact with the general run of people and do not know what they are doing and how it will affect the people for whom they are doing it.

The current scheme of removing all cattle from Calcutta by October 15 would have been praiseworthy but for the fact that it suffers from all the usual pitfalls of bureaucrat hatched schemes. It will be wonderful if it does not raise more problems than it solves.

The whole scheme as announced seems to be based on some peculiar assumptions. First, there seems in the official mind no harm in shifting the cattle to any other area so long as it is not in Calcutta and Howrah. Obviously, such removal will be only inside the Calcutta Metropolitan area, creating fresh health and sanitation problems in areas which are still less able to meet the threat. Already there are big concentrations of khatals in areas like Rishra disrupting the usual sanitary arrangements and if the removal is effected, the whole area around Calcutta will face the same problem from the influx of cattle. We may take it that few of these cattle will go to Haringhata. If the Government could not induce the gowalas to go there so long, removal of cattle outside Calcutta is not going to do the trick. But then there are the courts to step in. Or politics. Last time when the UF Minister struck an informal agreement with the khatals for supply of milk, Congress volunteers went about asking them not to supply the milk. "Why lose?" they were told. "It is your milk. You do what you like." Already one of the Ghoshes who pla-

gue West Bengal politics has spoken in favour of the gowalas.

Secondly, from the Milk Commissioner's admission, it is more than likely that the whole scheme will collapse through the sheer inability of the Haringhata Scheme to cope with the work. Already it has been announced that the capacity of the bottling plant is down by one third and supply of bottled milk has been restricted. It is also feared that it might take about a month to restore the bottling capacity to normal. About increase in capacity there is not a word. About the speed of repairs of things needed by the people, the Calcutta State Transport is a fair example with its broken down buses adorning the streets. A bus I saw stranded recently at about 8 in the morning was still there at 6 in the evening with the driver and conductor keeping watch. It could not even be towed back to the garage in 14 hours. But I am told this is nothing unusual. Sometimes drivers and conductors have to sleep the night through in their vehicles. So much for nationalisation under unwilling hands.

Lastly, while threatening to stop the usual source of supply from khatalas, the bureaucratic order says that any one who takes even a quarter litre milk from Haringhata already will not be entitled to get any further quantity. As if people were refusing to take milk from Haringhata so far and not the other way round!

All told, supply of milk in Calcutta is going to be in something of a mess before long unless a miracle happens or the courts step in to maintain the status quo. Even if everything goes according to Government plans, one thing is certain. With our peculiar genius to get around the law, large numbers of families will be found to have overnight acquired one or two

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cows or buffaloes of which the real owners will be the gowalas.

\* \*  
It may be the streak of mischievousness in me, but three bits of news caused me almost unalloyed pleasure. If we recall the events of yesterday it is only reasonable to feel happy when one finds some indications that Frankenstein's monster is at last turning on its master. The illegal attacks on democracy and the people are apparently having a chain effect now.

It was really delightful to learn that in a particular police station there were two OC's and similarly there were two wakf commissioners in the West Bengal Government. We can now look forward to the time when we shall have two Governors. The attack on the Additional District Magistrate and the abortive one on the District Magistrate in the Alipore Court, I would have been inclined to treat as sheer entertainment. Who are we to pass opinions when a husband and wife fight? After all, last year when the police and their hired goondas going by the name of plain-clothes policemen were beating up innocent citizens, the Magistracy did not interfere. So, if the police take it in their heads to knock down the ADM or the DM it is their affair and we can only stand on the sidelines and enjoy the sport. But things are never perfect. And in this case there were all the poor clerks and others who bore the brunt of the policemen's attack. All I can do is to offer them the consolation that they have suffered in a noble cause. Because of them perhaps our magistrates might realize that the police are beginning to consider themselves to be a law unto themselves.

\* \*  
The junior to a well known lawyer had been sent to the Capital to fight out a case of much importance, the senior being unwell. All concerned awaited eagerly news of the court's decision which came at last. The telegram read, "Justice has triumphed." Without a moment's hesitation the senior wired back, "Appeal immediately."

The Press

## Autonomy Within Autonomy

COMMENTATOR

AFTER vacillating for nearly two years the Government of India has at last announced its decision regarding the reorganisation of Assam. The non-violent direct action movement launched by the All-Party Hill Leader's Conference a day before might have hastened the announcement, for it showed that the hill people were solidly behind the demand for an autonomous State. But what they have been promised is a sub-State within Assam, a new monster which is expected to receive constitutional sanction in the winter session of Parliament. The plan falls short of what the hill leaders had been promised before the general election, and it remains to be seen if it is going to be further watered down in the coming months. Evidently, the Assam Congress and the Government it runs have been able to bully the Centre into refusing the hill people the substance of their demand. The threat of a "resistance movement" by the Assam Congress under the leadership of the Chief Minister, Mr B. P. Chaliha, has worked, and the Centre has drastically revised its earlier reorganisation plan which incurred the wrath of the Assam Congress leaders. The Centre's capitulation has been so quick and complete that it seems that everything was pre-arranged; that a reorganisation scheme acceptable to the hill leaders would be leaked out, that the Assam Congress would vehemently oppose it, and that the Centre would then announce an anaemic scheme which would not affect the Congress empire in Assam. The reaction of the hill people was left out of calculation in this arrangement; perhaps they were taken for granted. But they have become sullen while the Assam Congress is jubilating. The scheme may have solved some internal prob-

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lems of the Congress but it has failed to solve the problem of Assam.

Most of the papers started commenting on the proposal for reorganisation of Assam without waiting for the official announcement. Taking their cue from the attitude of the Assam Congress they thought the plan would concede to a large extent the demands of the hill people; they could not imagine that the final plan would reverse the position. *Patriot*, which belongs to this category, has taken the Assam Congress to task for making almost a fetish of Assam being a border State. It says that the proposal of a sub-State that has now emerged and which is reported to have won acceptance from Mr Morarji Desai, who was opposed to the idea of reorganisation earlier, is a compromise that will not damage Assam's basic integrity. The Assam Congress leaders may have sound statistical or political arguments while setting their face against reorganisation. But a fact they cannot ignore is that the hill people's leaders have popular support and the very stability of the border State depends on the hill people's aspirations being met without doing injury to the vital interests of the nation as a whole. Mr Morarji Desai was at first opposed to reorganisation because he feared that it might encourage separatist demands in other States with tribal populations but he was eventually persuaded that stability in the border State is also matter of paramount importance. The Assam Congress leaders cannot fail to take this important factor into account. The sub-State formula meets many of the objections raised against earlier proposals of reorganisation. The hill leaders can be persuaded to accept the formula. The Assam leaders should realise that rejecting it will only lead to instability which they themselves should be anxious to avoid.

Deploring that "crude pressure tactics" should have been resorted to by both sides on the eve of the proposed announcement of New Delhi's decision on reorganisation of Assam. *Amrita Bazar Patrika* has held the Government of India's "hesitant policy" res-

ponsible for the present delicate situation. It says that if the APHLC has thought it necessary to start its direct action even before the announcement of the Government's decision, it is presumably because of the suspicion that New Delhi might again succumb to the pressure of the Assam Congress. And, if past experience be any guide, the hill leaders can hardly be blamed for harbouring such misgivings. The sub-federation plan offered by Home Minister Chavan in January last year with the tacit approval of Chief Minister Chaliha ended in smoke because of the opposition of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee. The latter is now bent upon setting at naught even the Government of India's latest proposal of a autonomous hill State within the framework of an integrated set-up for the whole of Assam. Possibly no alternative was left to the APHLC to launching direct action to counter this pressure in order to keep the extremists in its own ranks in check. But there is a danger that though the hartal in Shillong was peaceful, the movement may not remain so for long. And the extremists, whom the APHLC is seeking to keep under control, may ultimately gain the upper hand. Nobody underestimates the political difficulties of the Assam Congress which are no less acute than those of the APHLC. But it has to be clearly recognised, at the same time, that chronic discontent in the highly strategic hill areas might undermine the security and progress of the entire State. It is, however, obvious that neither the APCC nor the APHLC is in a position—in view of the feelings already worked up in both the plains and the hill areas—to adopt any public posture which might be interpreted as a climb-down. If that be the case—which it really is—the best way out would be to leave the decision to the Government of India.

#### Raptures

*National Herald*, which reserved its judgment till the official announcement, has gone into raptures over "the excellent piece of work" done by the Union Home Ministry in devis-

ing a scheme which reconciles the statehood of Assam with autonomy for the people of the hill areas. The main merit of the scheme lies in the co-ordination devised between the State of Assam and the autonomous State. It is a workable scheme, and if it succeeds, as it will with sufficient cooperation, it will be a tribute to the political genius of the Indian people and an example of their capacity to devise appropriate schemes to meet their "just aspirations". As the most composite of the States of India, Assam has had problems with no parallel, and, while all legitimate claims to autonomy should be considered, there need be no fear about what might happen in other States if Assam were reorganised. It has not been a mere ethnic problem, linguistic problem, or economic problem: it is many problems in one. There could be no doubt that the existing set-up of the north-eastern region was outmoded. The map of Assam as we have known it is largely a product of British rule, and adjustments were necessary to make political unity a living thing and not some deadweight that depended merely on the framework of the Constitution. The paper says that the Government's aim has been to reconcile the aspirations and interests of the people inhabiting the hills with those of the inhabitants of the plains within the framework of the security of a sensitive border region. The scheme is also intended to serve the needs of development which alone can give substance to security. If it is worked by all parties and sections in a spirit of cooperation and understanding, it is bound to succeed and provide solutions to other problems.

#### Strike

The Government of India has at last intervened in the newspaper dispute, placating the proprietors. A breakthrough was possible only if one of the parties in the dispute had resiled from its earlier stand. So far as the newspaper owners are concerned it was out of the question, for their capacity to hold out is unlimited. The majority of them can

do without the profits from their newspapers; perhaps they will not know even that they are earning less because of the strike. They derive their economic power from elsewhere; the newspapers only add to the political power they enjoy through their economic suzerainty. The weaker party, as in all labour disputes, is the employees, the majority of whom had not got their salaries for the last two months. Even the salaries for the twenty two days they had worked in July remain unpaid in many cases.

The employees had practically reached the end of their tether, and voices of criticism of their all-India leaders were no longer muffled. Frustration was widespread, and it is clear that the employees had not bargained for such a prolonged strife. The strike was launched on the basis of certain assumptions all of which went wrong; not the least of these was that the Government would exercise its influence on the side of the employees. The Labour Minister who frequently roared in Parliament in the beginning was suddenly struck dumb by who knows what. Had he not commended the "reasonable" attitude of the employees and promised intervention should bipartite negotiations fail, the discussions would have perhaps taken a different turn. If the employees' representatives took a rigid stand, as some are saying now, it was largely because they were assured that the Government was with them. Not only has not this support been extended, but the Government seemed to have decided to help in the prolongation of the strike by agreeing to release advance quotas of newsprint to the papers that were publishing. This did prevent public clamour for a quick settlement of the dispute. By its inaction the Government has harmed not the employees alone; it has also harmed itself for it has been proved that the Government is powerless against the monopolists who own the bigger newspapers. The damage could have been partially repaired if the Government had kept its plighted word and made the wage board recommendations for non-journalists statutory.

## Book Review

### Up and Down the Ladder

RAJINDER PAUL

SOME human beings have known it for long that they are not children of God or that their great-great-great grandfathers had begot them after being kicked out from Eden. But very few would like to settle down with the fact that a step lower to us in the process of evolution is the horrible looking thing called chimpanzee. Eugenists should devote some of their gratuitous zeal to their neglected cousins.

Dr Desmond Morris<sup>1</sup> makes no bones about man's kinship to the chimpanzee. In fact, his main thesis is to puncture what he calls man's 'spiritual superiority', and make him understand his biological lineage, his fortunate evolution, so that in the process, by looking at the basic behavioural traits of other animals, he would be able to curb and thus sublimate his unsocial desires.

Dr Morris begins his excellent (and entertaining) book with the most direct statement: 'There are one hundred and ninety-three living species of monkeys and apes. One hundred and ninety-two of them are covered with hair. The exception is a naked ape self-named *Homo Sapiens*. This unusual and highly successful species spends a great deal of time examining his higher motives and an equal amount of time studiously ignoring his fundamental ones. He is proud that he has the biggest brain of all the primates but attempts to conceal the fact that he also has the biggest penis. . . . I am a zoologist and the naked ape is an animal. . . in acquiring lofty new motives, he has lost none of the earthly old ones. . .'

Dr Morris then goes on, in the chapters on Sex, Rearing, Fighting, Comfort, to show the basic sameness of habits of the hairy and the naked ape. And with this kinship comes the revelation that though we might be thinking ourselves evolved, the innate

animalism has remained intact. The 'hunting nature' of the naked ape, despite the family units, has only got itself a little transformed. He has only progressed from, let us say, 'hunting grounds' to 'place of business'. And what the modern man shows through in promoting his business is nothing but his unavoidable aggressiveness in acquiring 'food' and 'territory'—the ageold animal imperatives.

The book is full of interesting sidelights, and is a tremendous revelation. My line in this particular write-up is to link what Dr Morris, and what Dr Konrad Lorenz in his book, *On Aggression*<sup>2</sup>, and more recently, Antony Storr show in his book, *Human Aggression*<sup>3</sup>.

Besides the innocuous little displacement activities which we indulge in to overcome our inherited aggressiveness by lighting a cigarette or clearing the specs or glancing at the wrist watch, we are capable, as we have only demonstrated recently, of indulging in mass extermination. Mostly we exonerate ourselves with the euphemistic excuse 'it's human nature'. We also tell ourselves and our neighbours that we are rational, thinking human beings, with a history of civilization, and that our massive superstructure of technology and man-made wonders are a symbol of our rational achievements.

No doubt, we have a lot to peacock about. But there's a lot on the right side of the cashbook, which tells us that we have already overdrawn on 'reason' in nature. As Dr Lorenz says in the Chapter, *Ecce Homo*, that if an unbiased visitor were to discern human beings and occurrences such as 'migration of peoples, wars, and similar great historical events', 'he would never gain the impression that human behaviour was dictated by intelligence, still less by responsible morality'. We know man has not learned an iota from history, or the two ghastly wars, to be more particular. He is still governed by his carnivorous instincts. His social organization is very similar to that of rats, which are social and peaceful beings within their clans, but veritable devils toward all community. And with the rising population, deve-

lopment of deadlier weapons and the the political camps, the analogy can be furthered "to that of several hostile clans of rats on a ship almost devoid of food". Though, rats are more intelligent in that they automatically stop reproducing when they observe overcrowding. And, again, even after rats get slaughtered on a whole scale, quite a substantial portion will be left to continue the race. With our brainchild, the hydrogen bomb, we have very properly fixed our future.

### Spinoza's Rage

Dr Morris puts it very cogently: 'It is a fact that the most level-headed intellectuals frequently become violently aggressive when discussing the urgent need to suppress aggression (remember Spinoza, engaged in writing an essay on 'peace', flying into a rage when he found his coffee two minutes late.) This is not surprising. 'We are, to put it mildly, in a mess, and there is a strong chance that we shall have exterminated ourselves by the end of the century. Our only consolation will have to be that, as a species, we have had an exciting term of office'.

The dangers of self-extermination are more in man than in other animals, owing to the peculiar aggressive tendencies that we have acquired as the necessary by-products of sociocultural evolution, ideological fixedness, religious fanaticism, and the trial of our inventive skill at artificial weapons, or just the need to have belief in our power of thinking. In fact, as Dr Lorenz says, 'all the great dangers threatening humanity with extinction are direct consequences of conceptual thought and verbal speech. They drove him even out of the paradise in which he would follow his instinct with impunity and do or not do whatever he pleased. . . Knowledge springing from conceptual thought robbed man of the security provided by his well-adapted instinct. . .' Like other evolved exercises of the naked ape's brain, the ability to think is also a mixed blessing. And, perhaps, for the same reason Becket's Vladimir says in *Godot*: 'Where are all these corpses from? We must have thought a little'.

Though it is one of the greatest gifts of mankind, our instinct and animal inheritance have failed to cope with pure reason, and as we are experiencing today with the toys of science, our instincts are having the better of us in leading our fingers to the trigger and button. 'Prometheus who learned to preserve fire, used it to roast his brothers'.

Violence in today's society is the direct product of the undeveloped faculty of cool reasoning. Its sudden eruptions that we have seen in, let us say, the death of Gandhi, Kennedy, or Luther King, have given man cause to reconsider his graph of evolution. Even as we overlook that those murders were political, we cannot forget the Kansas murders in cold blood or the death of six hospital nurses by a man who had listened to someone mentioning 'murder' a few minutes ago. Just like that, for the heck of it. In fact, killing has become so easy that the modern man, bored with sports, indulges in the pastime of killing. I remember having been horrified by a recent film called *The Tenth Victim* set in the twenty-first century, in which after the tenth successful victim the sportsman is entitled to a gold medal. Modern literature, particularly drama, which is by its very nature avant-garde, has given an appropriate name to one of its trends—The Theatre of Cruelty—which bases itself on the primitive instincts of man, as propagated by Artaud. One is also aware of Claude Van Itallie's *American Hurrah* in which two life-size puppets indulge in seemingly aimless destruction of motel property or Feiffer's *Little Murders* in which the guy just shoots from his home-window at people in the street, or the cruelty in Peter Brook's staging of *Marat/Sade* and his recent Seneca's *Oedipus*, Sor Marowitz *Hamlet*, and Edward Bond's *Saved* in which a sick child is stoned to death. One can go prolonging the list. There are various other manifestations of modern forms of aggression, of course on TV, in the cinema, in car-driving, in sexual perversion, in falling apart from the sobering influences of extended families, and in the optimum

apotheosis of the self in every walk of life.

The question that confronts us is: Are we going to survive our killing instincts? (Only the naked ape kills his fellow-beings—no other species does so). What is our future? Do we really want to live—or are we just going to be victims of what dear Freud called the death-wish?

Dr Lorenz is less pessimistic than Dr Morris, having, shall one say, less of the journalistic streak in him, in providing the last Chapter 'The Avowal of Optimism' in which he says all is not lost. We egotistically want to overlook the fact that our present state is not the optimum stage of evolution of the naked ape. We may and perhaps we will wriggle out of our self-inflicted bogeys, dogmas and chaos. As it is, there are various ways to reduce the aggression: by expending such force on innocuous objects (hitting empty cardboard boxes), by sublimating it into creative channels, as also by promoting personal relationship between individuals of opposed ideologies.

### Over-crowding

But the greatest incentive to aggression, as one knows, comes from over-crowding. We are breeding like hell. 'At the end of the seventeenth century the world population of naked apes was only 500 million. It is now . . . 3000 million. . . In 260 years' time . . . there will be 400,000 million naked apes crowding the face of the earth. This gives a figure of 11,000 individuals to every square mile of the entire land surface. . . So family planning (it has strange connotation in India), Mr Storr puts it unambiguously, must be effected immediately if we mean to survive. He also mentions other palliatives to lessen aggression—like the system of democracy where you have the prerogative to unleash only 'the dogs of war' through the mouth. One must also, as they are thinking of doing it in America, make difficult the procurement of fire-arms, killer's knife, and other such gadgets. And consequently make the violence-provoking novels, TV shows, films, by mutual consent, into rarities. We

must display not only camouflage methods, but a genuine 'moral responsibility'. There's nothing bad or old fashioned about the word 'moral responsibility', as the new generations of writers and public bent on appropriating all claims to irresponsibility would let us believe. It is man's special gift and it can save several wars, many unnecessary interventions and much confusion.

Dr Morris thinks 'if we don't recognise ourselves and our biological ways, our animal nature, if we do not improve in quality rather than in quantity', 'our suppressed biological urges will build up and till the dam bursts and the whole of our elaborate existence is swept away in the flood'. Shall we? After all, of all the 193 species, only the naked ape has the gift of laughter.

1. *The Naked Ape* by Desmond Morris; Jonathan Cape. 30s.

2. *On Aggression* by Konrad Lorenz; Bantam Books. \$1.25.

3. *Human Aggression* by Antony Storr; Allan Lane, The Penguin Press. 25s.

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## Letters

### Czechoslovakia

When the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia should be taken as an unpleasant yet unavoidable "positive check" to the fast "withering away" of the socialist system and all progressive forces should resolutely support the action at this critical juncture, it is surprising that a magazine of *Frontier's* status should be in competition with the reactionary Press in condemning it as naked imperialist aggression to divide the world between the two super-Powers. It appears that a section of our "progressives" have been trying to equate the Soviet Union and the USA as equally dangerous imperialist Powers, and this intervention has supplied them the long awaited data to "prove" their thesis. Today the East Wind and West Wind are blowing together—listen to the Voice of America and Radio Peking, and we have the unique opportunity to observe the Pentagon-Peking axis against Moscow.

Those who slander the Soviet move in Czechoslovakia supported the same in Hungary more than a decade ago. In a broadcast on the development of ideological differences with Moscow, Radio Peking said that the Communist Party of China had advised the Soviet Union to intervene in Hungary when the latter had been vacillating. Today the situation in Czechoslovakia is no less dangerous but only the attitude to the Soviet Union has undergone a change, and to oppose the Soviet Union in everything has become a part and parcel of the general line of the communist movement for some people. In Hungary it was only the assault of the small landholders' association with the help of outside agents, but here the infiltration of the anti-socialist forces has taken place within the Communist Party itself, with the strength to stage a peaceful transition to capitalism, giving even an open call for a "multi-party system".

"Prague, June 29: More than 90% of non-communists polled in a survey by the Czechoslovak Commu-

nist Party newspaper *Rude Pravo* support the idea of choice between several independent political parties.

The poll of 38,000 readers showed 50% to 60% of the party members consider that socialist democracy can be guaranteed through a multi-party system."

*The Statesman*, June 30, 1968

So the situation went well out of hand and the first task was to bring it under control. Those who accuse the Soviet Union for this deterioration of socialist values in Czechoslovakia are correct, but they forget that the turmoil in Hungary was also due to the Soviet Union as a direct result of destalinisation and the 20th Congress of the CPSU, the mother of modern revisionism, and yet we stood by the Soviet Union in that critical time.

The sovereignty of any Communist Party is sacred, also the sovereignty of any country. But the sovereignty of the socialist system is much more sacred, and whenever there is a choice between the two, a communist must choose the latter. There is a qualitative difference between revisionism and reversionism, though the former is the cause and the latter the effect. Revisionism is a disease but the hope is there that it can be cured if properly treated, but reversionism is death which indicates the end of a process. If the Soviet Union as a "revisionist" country has fought reversionism in Czechoslovakia we should at least utter two cheers for it, one for putting this immediate positive check, another for highlighting the whole issue of revisionism by provoking a new debate on the issue, but the third should be kept reserved for the day when the very cause will be removed through proper ideological treatment.

ARUN KUMAR ROY  
Sindri, Dhanbad

If a wrong thing produces a right result we should think twice before we condemn the wrongdoer outright. The world as it is, between two evils we need to accept the lesser one. And the Czechs, willy-nilly, will have to accept it. Russia has just swallowed a bitter pill—worldwide disapprobation of her action—and

that is a punishment she deserves. But rationality demands that while one condemns her action, one should not fail to appreciate the salutary effect it produces. The Czech people, I believe, will appreciate it before long provided, of course, all of socialism has not been lost there already. The entire affair is also very likely to produce serious thinking for the earlier prevention of revisionism in other socialist areas, including Russia. Communists need also be pragmatic and if they are really so they won't decry the whole matter as just "Praguematic".

AMITAVA BANERJI  
Calcutta-47.

### "The Same Path"

Mr Chayan Sen Gupta's rejoinder (August 31) to "Another Reader's" letter of August 10 reveals that he is still living in a world of dreams. Let the CPM leaders speak for themselves. In his letter to Mr Nanda, the then Home Minister, Mr M. Basavpunniah, a member of the Politbureau bewailed that though section 113 of their programme dealing with the path of transition is almost the same as sections 99 and 112 of the Dangeites' programme adopted in Bombay and though "the same phrases, almost akin passages are found in both the programmes, Nanda chose to spread the base slander that the "Marxists" were advocating the path of violence. I hope Mr Sen Gupta will forgive me for quoting at length from Basavpunniah's letter to Nanda: It is true as Nanda states, that there has been a new orientation in the world communist movement, on this question and the same is incorporated in the Moscow Declaration of 1957, the Moscow Statement of 81 parties in 1960 and such other documents. Unlike the earlier rare and exceptional possibilities of the peaceful transition to the socialist revolution, new additional possibilities of it in some countries have been visualized under the new world conditions that are obtaining today. The reasons given for this change are the following: In view

of the rapid change of the strength between the forces of world socialism and imperialism in favour of socialism, in view of the restricted possibilities (sic!) for the export of counter-revolution by the imperialist States, and in view of the ever expanding ideas of socialism gripping wider sections of the people, it is expected that all this would greatly restrain the ruling classes from resorting to the adventures of violence, and in some countries at least certain possibilities have arisen for such a peaceful path to be explored and utilized by the communists of those countries. It is exactly on the basis of this new assessment that we have introduced this new concept of peaceful transition to socialism in our party programme. The formulation of this concept as well as the general warning against the danger of violence usually unleashed by the ruling classes, is exactly similar to the one put forth in the programme of the Dangeites. Then where does the question of our opposition to the "new orientation" and some others supporting it arise? It is an outright slander" (*People's Democracy*, January 30, 1966).

They did not stop there. Mr Sundaraiyya begged Nanda to allow them to act as a legal party and function openly and made no secret of their apathy, if not allergy, towards armed struggle (Sundaraiyya answers Nanda (*People's Democracy* September 19, 1965). Mr E.M.S. Namboodiripad went further and even obliterated the superficial differences with the Dangeites on this score [vide page 74, *The Programme explained* — E.M.S. Namboodiripad].

I think Mr Sen Gupta will now agree with Lenin that when the proletariat's right to revolution was sold for a mess of pottage—organisations permitted by the present police law—the time is ripe for beginning the building of a revolutionary organisation. "But it can be begun only over the heads of the old leaders, the stranglers of revolutionary energy, over the heads of the old party, through its destruction".

A student of Marxism

## এক্ষণ

সাহিত্য ও সংস্কৃতি বিষয়ক  
দ্বিমাসিক পত্রিকা

কাল মার্কস বিশেষ সংখ্যা

১৯৬৮

॥ রচনাসূচী ॥

কাল হাইনার্থ মার্কস : মুরারি ঘোষ ॥  
কাল মার্কসের ধর্মচিন্তা : সোমেন্দ্র মুরখো-  
পাধ্যায় ॥ মার্কসের ইতিহাসতত্ত্ব : হীরেন্দ্র-  
নাথ মুরখোপাধ্যায় ॥ ভারত প্রসঙ্গে মার্কস :  
সুনীল সেন ॥ অপরিচিত মার্কস : জন  
লুইস ॥ মার্কস ও একালের মানবতাবাদ :  
অ্যাডাম শাফ ॥ মার্কসবাদ ও মার্কসবাদী :  
শ্যামল চক্রবর্তী ॥ মার্কসবাদ ও বিজ্ঞান :  
প্রতুল বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ॥ মার্কস ও সর্বহারা  
শ্রেণী : পল সুইজি ॥ দাস্ ক্যাপিটাল ও  
আমি : ক্রিস্টোফার হিল ॥ মার্কস ও মানব-  
সত্তা : গোতম সান্যাল ॥ কাল মার্কস ও  
অ্যালিয়েনেশন : সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ চক্রবর্তী ॥  
মার্কসীয় জ্ঞানতত্ত্ব প্রসঙ্গে : ব্যারোজ ডান-  
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চট্টোপাধ্যায় ॥ মার্কসবাদ ও বিপ্লব : অমিয়-  
ভূষণ চক্রবর্তী ॥ মার্কস ও আধুনিক  
অর্থনীতি : অমিয় দাশগুপ্ত ॥ 'বুর্জোয়া'  
অর্থশাস্ত্রে মার্কসীয় প্রভাব : মার্টিন  
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ডব ॥ কাল মার্কস ও নিগমতত্ত্ব : অমলেন্দ্র  
গুহ ॥ সুনন্দর ও কাল মার্কস : অলোকরঞ্জন  
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রজনী পাম দত্ত ॥ 'এশিয়াটিক ব্যবস্থা'  
প্রসঙ্গে : দীপেন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় ॥ প্রাচ্য ও  
প্রতীচ্যে বিজ্ঞান ও সমাজ : জোসেফ  
নীডহ্যাম ॥

এবং

কালানুক্রমিক ঘটনাপঞ্জি ॥ মার্কসের রচনা-  
বলী ॥ বাংলায় মার্কসচর্চা ॥

সুন্দরিত ১০০ পৃষ্ঠা

দাম সাড়ে তিন টাকা মাত্র

এক্ষণ কার্যালয় / ৭৩ মহাত্মা গান্ধী রোড  
কলকাতা ৯

## “Two Into One”

Mr Sumanta Banerjee's "Communists and the Third World" (September 7) is not convincing. We shall deal mainly with his comment on Anna Louise Strong. However, in passing we cannot but note Mr Banerjee's implicit view that polemics are by and large antagonistic to action. When theory and practice do not move together, terminology and polemics tend to become rigid. But Mr Banerjee should know that one of the distinguishing characteristics of a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary movement is its emphasis on theoretical clarity and grasp of existing conditions. Anna Louise Strong's criticisms fall into this category and are not hairsplitting by a party which has bypassed the application of principles in its active propaganda.

Anna Louise Strong never criticised the Peoples Revolutionary Party of Vietnam for trying to consolidate the Front in its fight against the U.S. What she attempted to do was to point out certain defects in the Front's recently published Political Programme, which shows a tendency towards revisionism and which might in the future create

trouble for the Front. She pointed out that a communist party fighting a war of liberation against foreign aggression must understand the dialectics and contradictions of such a union so as to bring about the victory of socialism in that country. The slogan "two into one" often raised by supporters of common fronts is a wrong one. In any unity of opposites the forces maintain their respective characteristics and cannot form a union in the sense that two become one, that is, their contradiction does not disappear in forming their front.

In Vietnam today there are two types of contradictions: the first is between the foreign aggressor and the national forces. The second is between various social classes within Vietnam itself. The first contradiction is the principal contradiction that faces a national liberation movement and here it is always possible to forge a common front against the invader. Nevertheless no party built on Marxist-Leninist principles can ignore the second contradiction, i.e., contradiction between opposite classes in society. Not only is the second contradiction vital for the establishment of socialism in the country but also, as victory becomes certain on the battlefield, it is sure to become the primary one. The Political Programme of the NLF does not, however, show that it has been able to appreciate these implications (though it does include such a slogan as land to the tiller).

Therefore the only debatable point in the whole issue is whether the time is ripe or not for the Front to initiate internal class struggle disregarding the limited Programme of the Front. Here, no doubt, data can be gathered for either viewpoint. But if the pronouncement of the North Vietnamese representative in Peking is any guide (he said in an interview that the NLF controls two-thirds of the total land in South Vietnam), then it would seem reasonable that this is the moment to emphasise the second contradiction.

READERS  
Calcutta

## Oil Workers

While the commission of enquiry set up by the Government of India is investigating the whole issue of job security in foreign oil companies, the Burmah-Shell management has declared its decision to retrench 115 clerks and 235 labour staff in Calcutta.

The oil workers met the Prime Minister in Calcutta on September 9 in a deputation and asked for immediate Government action to stop the retrenchment. But will the Government act? Will the Union Labour Minister repeat his helplessness in the face of this direct threat from the foreign oil monopolists which throws the employees out on the road, ignoring the importance of a commission appointed by the Government itself?

On the labour front we find the employers flouting the decisions of government-appointed bodies one after another. The newspaper employers' deliberate act in flouting the Wage Board's decision has dragged newspaper workmen into a countrywide strike. Will the Government give similar latitude to the foreign oil monopolists?

If the laws of the land do not protect the workers from the onslaught of their employers, the former will have little choice but to come out vigorously to establish their own rights for their own protection.

Since the Indian Oil Corporation came in the market, the foreign oil monopolists have been up against it. The emergence of the IOC is used as a pretext by the foreign oil companies to retrench 350 workmen. No mention is made about computerisation and contract labour system which are at the root of this retrenchment. On automation government policy is thoroughly reactionary. About the contract labour system, the government is pledged to bring legislation, but nobody knows when it will come and what will be its fate.

S. S. BOSE  
Joint Secretary,  
Petroleum Workers' Union  
Calcutta



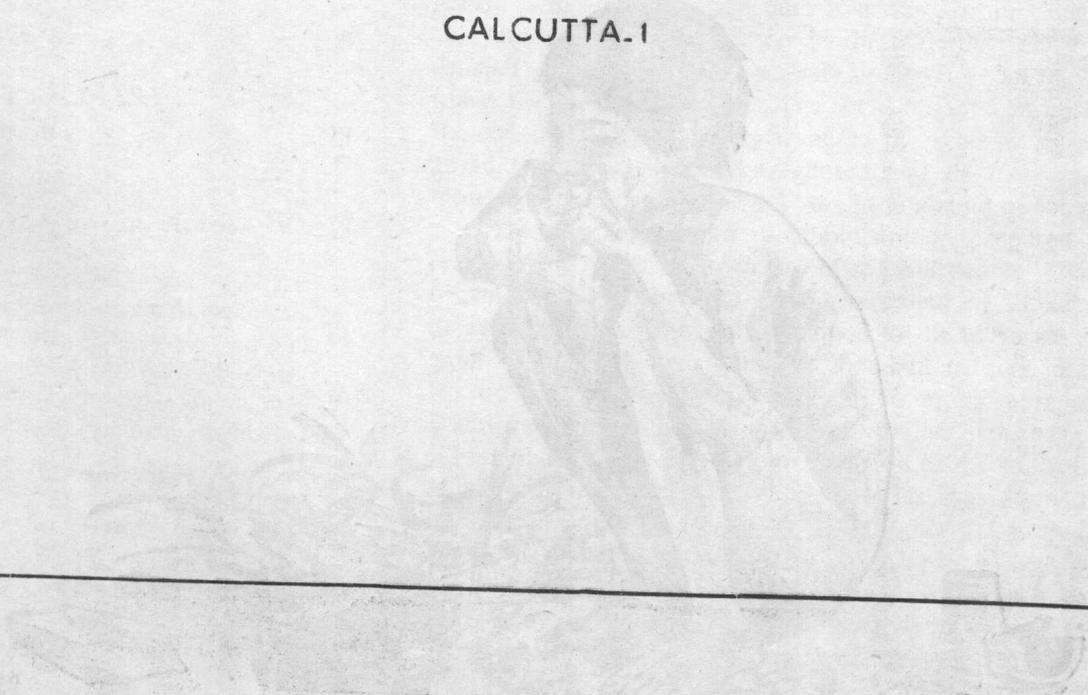
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